

The Second Coming

for Speaker, Oboe and Harpsichord

Gregory Carl Pfeiffer

Poem by Willam Butler Yeats

Performance Notes:

Speaker: The poem should be recited using a natural tone of voice. However, this is not meant to indicate that the text should be spoken without inflection or feeling. The speaker should narrate dramatically and attempt to capture the essence of the text. The accompanying instrumental music should act as a guide to inform the speaker as to the mood of a given passage.

The metrical placement of text is approximate, however the performer should try to begin portions of text where they appear to occur in the score. The speaker should make certain to be clearly heard above the musical material and use amplification if necessary.

The piece may also be performed without a speaker as the instrumental music is sufficiently coherent to be performed as a stand-alone piece.

-G.C.P.

The Second Coming

Music by G. C. Pfeiffer
Text by W. B. Yeats

$\text{♩} = 65$

Speaker $\frac{4}{4}$ | $\frac{5}{4}$

Oboe $\frac{4}{4}$ p $\frac{5}{4}$

Harpichord $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{5}{4}$

3

Sp. $\frac{5}{4}$ | $\frac{4}{4}$

Ob. $\frac{5}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ mf

H. $\frac{5}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$

The musical score is divided into two systems. The first system includes parts for Speaker, Oboe, and Harpichord. The Speaker part starts in 4/4 time and changes to 5/4. The Oboe part begins with a whole note in 4/4, marked *p*, and continues into 5/4. The Harpichord part features complex rhythmic patterns with triplets and septuplets in 4/4, transitioning to 5/4. The second system includes parts for Soprano (Sp.), Oboe (Ob.), and Harp (H.). The Soprano part starts in 5/4 and changes to 4/4. The Oboe part has a melodic line with triplets and a quintuplet, marked *mf*, transitioning from 5/4 to 4/4. The Harp part provides accompaniment in 5/4 and 4/4.

5

Sp. (calmly)
Turning and turning in the widening gyre | the falcon cannot hear the falconer; | 3/8 | 4/8

Ob.

H.

pp

mf *p*

8:6

8

Sp. 4/8 | 4/8 | things fall apart; | 5/4

Ob.

H.

f *mp*

mp *f* *p* *f*

5 3

3 5

7

11

Sp. $\frac{5}{4}$ the centre cannot hold; $\frac{6}{8}$ mere anarchy $\frac{3}{4}$

Ob. *cantabile* mf mp 3 4:3 5:3

H. 6 5

13

Sp. $\frac{3}{4}$ is loosed upon the world, $\frac{4}{4}$ the blood-dimmed $\frac{5}{8}$ tide is loosed, $\frac{5}{4}$

Ob. mf f p mf pp 3 5

H. 5

16

Sp. $\frac{5}{4}$ and everywhere the ceremony of $\frac{4}{4}$ innocence is drowned; $\frac{5}{4}$

Ob. $\frac{5}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{5}{4}$

H. $\frac{5}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{5}{4}$

mp *mf* *ppp*

18

Sp. $\frac{5}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ the best lack all conviction, $\frac{2}{4}$ while the worst $\frac{6}{8}$

Ob. $\frac{5}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{6}{8}$

H. $\frac{5}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{6}{8}$

pesante *p* *mp*

21

Sp. are full of passionate intensity. $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{9}{8}$ $\frac{3}{4}$

Ob. $\frac{5}{6}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{9}{8}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ *f* *sfzp* *ff* Fltg.

H. $\frac{8}{6}$ $\frac{7}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$

24 *(rushed; becoming anxious)*

Sp. Surely some revelation is at hand; Surely the Second Coming is at hand. The

Ob.

H.

26

Sp. Second Coming! Hardly are those words out when a

Ob.

H.

p *mf*

7 5 7

12/8 12/8 12/8

27

Sp. 12/8 vast image out of Spiritus Mundi troubles my sight: 4/4 (calmly) a waste of 5/4

Ob.

H.

mp *p* *espressivo e dolce*

8:6 11:6

12/8 4/4 5/4

29

Sp. $\frac{5}{4}$ desert sand; a shape with lion body $\frac{4}{4}$ and the head of a man | a gaze $\frac{5}{4}$

Ob.

H.

32

Sp. $\frac{5}{4}$ blank and pitiless as the sun, $\frac{4}{4}$ is moving its slow $\frac{3}{4}$ thighs, $\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$

Ob.

H.

36

Sp. $\frac{3}{4}$ while all about it wind shadows $\frac{5}{4}$ of the indignant desert birds.

Ob. *lirico*
mf *p* *mp*

H.

Detailed description: This block contains the musical notation for measures 36 and 37. The Soprano (Sp.) part has the lyrics "while all about it wind shadows" in 3/4 time, followed by "of the indignant desert birds." in 5/4 time. The Oboe (Ob.) part begins with a melodic line in 3/4 time, marked *lirico*, *mf*, and *p*. It includes three triplet markings. The Horn (H.) part consists of a sustained bass line in 3/4 time, which changes to 5/4 time in measure 37.

38

Sp. The darkness drops again but now I know that twenty

Ob. *p*

H.

Detailed description: This block contains the musical notation for measures 38 and 39. The Soprano (Sp.) part has the lyrics "The darkness drops again but now I know that twenty". The Oboe (Ob.) part features a melodic line in 3/4 time, marked *p*, with two triplet markings. The Horn (H.) part consists of a sustained bass line in 3/4 time, which changes to 5/4 time in measure 39.

40

Sp. centuries of stony sleep were vexed to nightmare by a rocking $\frac{3}{4}$ cradle,

Ob.

H.

pp ∇ ff

Fltg.

3 3

43

Sp.

Ob.

H.

mf p f

7 5

46

Sp. $\frac{3}{4}$ and what rough $\frac{4}{4}$ beast, its hour come round $\frac{3}{8}$ at last, $\frac{3}{4}$ slouches towards $\frac{5}{4}$

Ob. Flg. *mp* *p*

H.

50

Sp. $\frac{5}{4}$ Bethlehem to be born? $\frac{4}{4}$

Ob.

H.

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